



# ANNUAL REPORT

*Rīpoata ā-tau*  
2023-2024



TE HONONGA  
AKORANGA  
COMET



## MIHI

*Nō Te Hononga Akoranga COMET  
te honore kia whakaatu te pūrongo-  
a-tau nei ki a koutou.*

*Ka tika hoki te tuku mihi nui ngā  
rōpū i tautoko a mātou kaupapa.*

*Nā reira, he mihi maioha ki ngā hau  
e wha. Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou,  
tēnā ra koutou katoa.*

It is Te Hononga Akoranga COMET's honour  
to present this annual report to you all.

It is correct to acknowledge all of the  
groups who have supported our projects.

Finally, deep acknowledgements to the four  
winds (all areas near and far). Thank you,  
thank you, thank you all.



Te Hononga Akoranga COMET, 2024  
PO Box 3430, Shortland St, Auckland 1010

 [cometauckland.org.nz](https://cometauckland.org.nz)

 [facebook.com/cometaki](https://facebook.com/cometaki)

 [linkedin.com/company/comet-auckland](https://linkedin.com/company/comet-auckland)

## CONTENTS

CHAIR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE KŌRERO	2
DELIVERING VALUE	3
STEM	
STEM Alliance Aotearoa	4
STEM Educators Expo	6
Curious Minds South Auckland	8
WeSTEM	10
STRATEGIC ROADMAP 2024	12
YOUTH VOICES	
Rangatahi Writers' Group	14
Student Voice	15
Youth Voices Film-making Workshop	16
Tāmaki Makaurau Education Forum	17
DATA & EVIDENCE	18
LANGUAGES	20
INVALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS	21
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS	22
OUR TEAM	24

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The generous support of the communities that trust us and continue to believe that progress is possible makes our work possible. We are grateful for the commitment and dedication shown by these people who are passionate about making education accessible for all Aucklanders.

We thank:

- The Mayor of Auckland, Wayne Brown
- Rachel Wilson and Alastair Cameron from Auckland Council
- Auckland Councillors and Local Board members
- The many Auckland Council and CCO officers who liaise with us and support our work
- The Independent Māori Statutory Board, Pacific People's Advisory Panel, Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel and Youth Advisory Panel, all of whom provide us with advice, challenge and support
- Bell Gully, who provide us with pro bono legal work
- The Clarity Business, Hight Design Studio, No Six and Polina Howe, who provide us with communications and design support
- Our generous sponsors this year: Auckland Council; Bay Trust; BlueSky Community Trust; Lion Foundation; Ministry for Pacific Peoples; Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment; and Rano Community Trust
- Our partners, who provide significant in-kind support: AUT, BNZ Partners, ByteEd, Centre for Pacific Languages, CLANZ, Education Counts, Education Today, EMA, ESR, Fisher & Paykel Healthcare, Food for Thought, GHD Group, Manukau Institute of Technology, Ministry of Education, MOTAT, NIWA, Plant and Food Research, PWC, Statistics NZ, Tāmaki College, Tāmaki Regeneration Company, Te Whare Wānanaga o Awanuiārangi, Te Wharekura o Maniapoto, TESOLANZ, University of Auckland and Waka Aotearoa Education
- Our staff, volunteers and trustees
- Our many project partners, whom we value immensely but are too numerous to name here

# CHAIR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE KŌRERO

From humble beginnings 24 years ago in the heart of south Auckland, COMET has changed and evolved alongside a rapidly transforming Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland.

2023 saw the most significant transformation as we chose to move away from council control to become an independent charity. As scary as this move was, it was necessary.

Our independence allows us to be bolder with our approach to risk. We have a loyalty to our community, and we will act to ensure equitable progress is realised.

Given the significant challenges facing Tāmaki Makaurau — and the critical infrastructure decisions required to determine our future as a liveable city — it is also crucial that we have a workforce that can meet those demands. No one will care more for this city than those who live, work and raise their whānau here.

Education is a critical component to a healthy, wealthy, prospering society. In recent years, education has become more complex than at any other time, requiring organisations like COMET to work closer to communities than it has before to close education gaps for better futures.

This report highlights the projects we drove during the year ending 30 June 2024 and provides insight into our focus moving forward.

Our **Strategic Roadmap** (pp 12–13) outlines how we will work with our four key communities and what we aim to achieve with them.

Giving **rangatahi** agency and voice has always been at the heart of what we do. Ensuring that they can see their future drives us.

We must develop a robust business model to ensure our long-term sustainability. Partnering with **industry** to address the talent issue that will become a major risk to the future of our nation in the next decade is a priority.

Finally, this progress is not possible without **whānau** and **kaiake**. Never have the pillars of mana motuhake and equity been more important.

Thank you to the incredible team of talented, passionate people who are COMET — past, present and future.



*Katherine Leitner*

**Katheren Leitner**  
Chief Executive



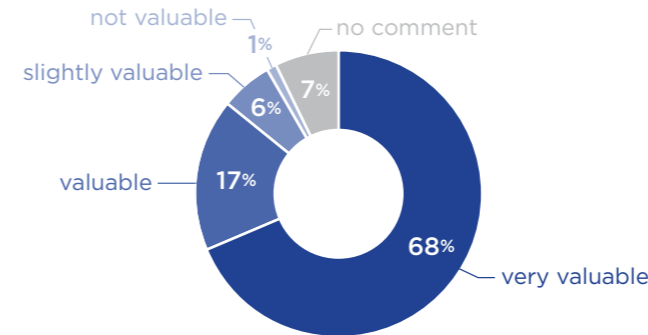
*Tracy Massam*

**Tracy Massam**  
Board Chair

# DELIVERING VALUE

Here are some highlights from our stakeholder feedback survey for the period ending 30 June 2024.

Our stakeholders value our efforts to support education and skills throughout Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland



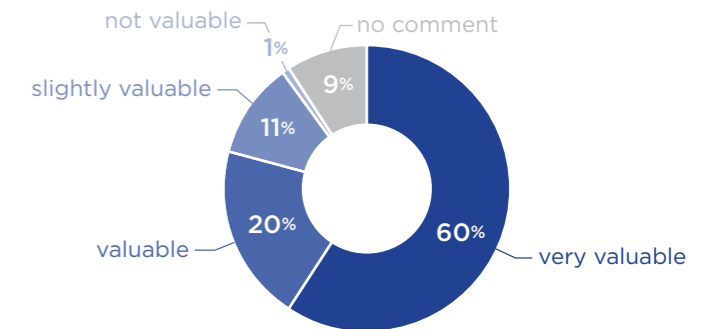
*"I respect the work that COMET has done in the past and continues to do to highlight inequities in education provision. I value its independent, critical voice."*

*"I was able to connect with partners and teachers running projects, which [helped] to ensure the success of our project."*

**58%**

**of our stakeholders said they made changes to their work or organisation after collaborating with us or using information we provided**

Our stakeholders value our efforts to raise awareness of high priority gaps and opportunities



*"COMET's work is unique and essential because of what it does."*

# STEM

## STEM Alliance Aotearoa

### A trusted voice in STEM community engagement

The 2023/24 period was transformative for STEM Alliance Aotearoa, as we refined our strategic focus to supporting STEM industries engage with schools and communities.

Our efforts over the last year have centred on testing and refining our offerings — both for businesses and community stakeholders — and growing our brand recognition.

We achieved this through a wide range of events and engagement opportunities. Each engagement has given us greater exposure to new audiences and allowed us to share our expertise and unique understanding of community engagement across the STEM ecosystem.

### Community engagement workshops

We facilitated workshops on developing successful STEM community engagement programmes for businesses and academia at two international conferences in Auckland:

- International Conference of Women Engineers and Scientists (ICWES19) in September
- IEEE Women in Engineering Summit in December

Feedback from these workshops has shown that interest in STEM engagement initiatives is high.

Through events like these, we have proven our ability to show what effective engagement looks like and how to design a community-centred initiative, all of which helps organisations to embark on their engagement journeys and/or deepen their impact.

*“I would love for my team to get this sort of training on what successful engagement looks like — simple things like ensuring you’re talking to students in the right way ... It’s so valuable.”*

– community engagement workshop attendee

*“I gained great insights into what other STEAM providers are doing and the impact they're having, especially for Māori and Pasifika students. It would be great to have networking sessions like this more often.”*

– networking event attendee



### Networking events

**15 November 2023.** We hosted a successful networking evening at the GHD offices in Freemans Bay. The event featured a panel of insightful speakers, including:

- Kate Stevenson, senior forensic scientist at ESR
- Evo Leota-Tupou, director of Pacific Kids' Learning
- Jason Tahī, senior advisor at Pūhoro STEMM Academy

Attendees also engaged in discussions on how organisations — including businesses and education providers — could supplement the curriculum and support more teachers.

Feedback from this event inspired this year's Connecting Curious Minds: STEM Educators Expo (see overleaf).



### Awareness of STEM community engagement is growing, but we need to turn up the volume!

Despite being a small team, our expertise in STEM community engagement has received increasing recognition. Our commitment to knowledge-sharing, collaboration and community voice is key to our success as a conduit between the STEM industry and communities.

We believe that opportunities for businesses to invest in STEM community engagement are endless, and we are well-positioned to support organisations to plan, connect and evaluate their engagement efforts.

The STEM Educators Expo generated amazing buzz in the STEM outreach and engagement community in Auckland. We look forward to building on this momentum.

To learn more about STEM Alliance Aotearoa and how you can get involved, please visit [stemalliance.org.nz](https://stemalliance.org.nz)



# CONNECTING CURIOUS MINDS STEM EDUCATORS EXPO

**1 July 2024.** We proudly hosted our inaugural Connecting Curious Minds: STEM Educators Expo in MOTAT's new Te Puawānanga Science and Technology Centre. This event was specifically designed to connect primary school educators with STEM outreach providers and professionals.

We were delighted to welcome over 30 exhibitors and 180 attendees to the expo, all of whom were focused on building connections and enhancing STEM outreach and education.

## A dynamic evening with something for everyone

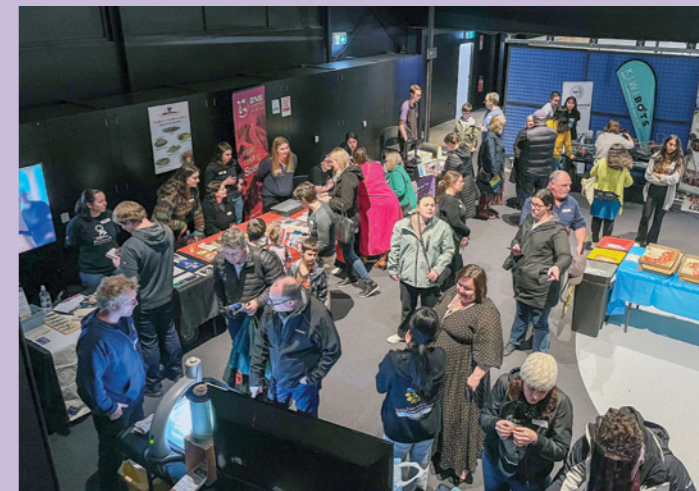
Packed with activities and exhibits, the STEM Educators Expo catered to all areas of STEM education. With a focus on equipping teachers with new ideas and opportunities, the expo enabled attendees to:

- connect with STEM outreach and education providers
- hear success stories of authentic STEM collaboration
- network with like-minded STEM enthusiasts
- explore MOTAT's new science exhibits

Based on feedback, the majority of our attendees valued the networking opportunities, which shows the worth in creating spaces for people to connect.

Exhibitors and attendees alike appreciated the in-depth conversations and knowledge sharing. Exhibitors were not merely there to “sell their wares”; they were there to listen and learn as well.

We believe this is how more effective STEM education can be achieved — by building connections, fostering conversations and opening doors for collaboration.



**100%**  
of attendees were  
satisfied with the  
expo overall

**87%**  
of attendees thought the  
networking opportunities  
were valuable

**94%**  
of attendees would  
recommend the expo  
to a colleague

*“Speaking directly with the educators was invaluable [as it] highlighted gaps for us ... and [showed us] how we can be intentional to help support schools and teachers.”*

– expo attendee (STEM industry professional)

To watch highlights from the STEM Educators Expo, scan or click on the QR code at right.



# Curious Minds South Auckland

## Building connections and teacher confidence is key to enhancing STEM in south Auckland

Since 2015, the Curious Minds South Auckland Participatory Science Platform (PSP) has distributed over \$1.3 million in contestable funding to projects that empower communities to tackle big science questions and local challenges. These projects have engaged more than 8,000 young people and 1,400 adults in STEM.

In recent years, we have focused on developing connections and building the capacity of project partners — particularly teachers and community educators — to gain valuable skills and confidence.

By supporting educators to enhance their teaching practice, we are able to extend our influence beyond the scope of individual projects and impact future cohorts of students long after the funding is spent.

*“I have seen how this hands-on, real-world STEM learning can be hugely beneficial for children. The students’ confidence increased [during the project], and they developed their teamwork, leadership and other soft skills. I am looking into [PLD] in this area for myself so I can continue and enhance this work.”*

– Kimberley Sullings, teacher  
Christ the King Catholic School

## Culturally Responsive Pedagogies Workshop

**10 July 2023.** We hosted a workshop on culturally responsive pedagogies in STEM teaching at the Fickling Centre in Three Kings. A substantial majority of the Curious Minds project leaders attended.

During the workshop, speakers Dr Sonny Natanielu and our kaitūhono Māori Noah Meggitt shared insights on honouring students’ cultural backgrounds and incorporating indigenous knowledge into teaching practices.

This workshop created a supportive environment in which educators could network and discuss the challenges and opportunities around building cultural inclusion into STEM projects. Attendees left with practical strategies to enhance their teaching methods and to better engage their students.



## Curious Minds Conference

**20 October 2023.** We hosted more than 150 students, teachers and community stakeholders in MOTAT’s Aviation Hall to celebrate the achievements of ten of our Curious Minds and WeSTEM projects.

Keynote speaker Dr Jacob Ngaha shared his journey to becoming Aotearoa NZ’s first Māori quantum physicist. Dr Ngaha also encouraged the audience to follow their natural curiosities and not to be discouraged if it takes time to find their passion.

Overall, the conference enabled students and teachers to experience the fun (and nerves!) of being a “scientist for the day” as they presented their research to their peers then fielded questions from the audience.



## Looking ahead to our next evolution

As we celebrate the successes of the past year, we also look to the future with optimism and determination. Whilst MBIE funding for the Curious Minds platform will end in December 2024, we know there is strong demand for this model of science engagement in our communities.

We seek to evolve the platform based on our years of experience and stakeholder feedback, including by focusing our target audience, expanding our reach and diversifying our sources of funding and in-kind support.

We aim to build greater collaboration between communities, grant funders, STEM businesses and academia. By working together, we know we can achieve greater collective impact for our educators, community partners and, ultimately, the rangatahi whom we are all here to serve.

To learn more about our projects, our future plans and how to get involved, contact us at [stem@cometauckland.org.nz](mailto:stem@cometauckland.org.nz)

To read the latest *Curious Minds South Auckland showcase*, scan or click on the QR code below.



# WeSTEM

## Uncovering Pasifika potential through STEM

Engaging Pasifika students and communities in STEM is crucial for fostering diverse perspectives and growing representation in the STEM workforce.

Our WeSTEM PSP, funded by the Ministry for Pacific Peoples, is paving the way by fostering new opportunities for Pasifika students in west Auckland to engage in STEM through project-based learning.

In 2023, we funded six projects involving more than 440 students, 32% of whom identified as Pasifika.

By the time the projects finished, 65% of these participants understood that scientists were working to address issues that mattered to them personally.

With service to family and community deeply embedded in Pasifika values, the participants could see the relevance of STEM in their everyday lives as well as the rewarding and beneficial opportunities that STEM pathways can provide.

WeSTEM's impact is evident in the testimonials from teachers and STEM experts, who note the increased engagement and enthusiasm for science among their students.

The students themselves expressed a growing desire to engage with their communities and continue participating in similar projects.

These encouraging outcomes are celebrated in our 2023 WeSTEM Project Showcase along with a variety of case studies, including the "Lichen Detectives" story featured on the next page.



To read the 2023 WeSTEM Project Showcase, scan or click on the QR code below.



# WeSTEM's Lichen Detectives

## Green Bay High School students investigate a novel approach to using bio-indicators of air quality

In this 2023 WeSTEM project, six Green Bay High School students experienced first-hand the tangible links between science and environmental health by working alongside experts from GNS Science and the University of Otago to investigate the use of lichens as bio-indicators of air quality.

The students collected lichen samples from different sites around west Auckland and analysed these for heavy metal contaminants. Delving into the science of different contaminants and their origins enabled the students to determine the environmental factors influencing air quality in their community.

By connecting scientific concepts to real-world issues, this project provided a significant boost to student engagement in STEM at Green Bay High School.

A major highlight for the participants was a trip to Dunedin to meet the scientists in person and to see cutting-edge lab equipment in action — an experience that will no doubt put them in good stead for entering tertiary studies and continuing with science in the future.

*"We were lucky to collaborate with amazing science partners who know how to engage students early ... so we can have more Pasifika students doing tertiary science."*

– Dr Angelo Tedoldi, project lead  
Green Bay High School



# STRATEGIC ROADMAP 2024

## Whāia te mātauranga hei oranga mō koutou

### OUR POU

#### Mana Motuhake + Equity

these are the foundations for what, why and how we do things

### OUR WHAT

We work with communities to close the education gaps for better future

### OUR WHY 8 - 16 - 40

We know that less than 8% of students currently enrolled in STEM studies identify as Māori or Pasifika. In 16 years, these communities will represent 40% of our nation's workforce. Encouraging them to recognise STEM as a viable career pathway is our priority.

#### Rangatahi | Young People

##### HOW we work

Through creative writing and participatory STEM projects, we allow Rangatahi to explore futures available to them.

##### WHAT we aim to achieve

- Rangatahi having self-belief and a vision for their future
- Rangatahi exploring issues critical to their communities, researching how these can be addressed
- Rangatahi understanding the learning pathways that lead to different careers
- Rangatahi experiencing a wide range of professions and networks to pursue their dreams and aspirations

#### Kaiako | Educators

##### HOW we work

We connect educators with external support and resources to inspire their students into career pathways.

##### WHAT we aim to achieve

- An education system that values different markers of success
- Teachers providing students with learning experiences that open new worlds and possibilities
- Teachers connected to tools and resources enabling them to integrate STEM learning experiences into their lesson plans
- Schools prioritising pathways for Rangatahi to explore careers they haven't considered as an option

#### Whānau | Caregivers

##### HOW we work

We provide whānau and caregivers with information and experiences that allow them to become wise career counsellors.

##### WHAT we aim to achieve

- Whānau encouraging their young people to pursue careers
- Disrupting intergenerational thinking that traps Rangatahi in unhealthy habits and beliefs
- Whānau recognising the significance of STEM fields for kaitiakitanga

#### Industry

##### HOW we work

We connect industry with Rangatahi and their communities to support and inspire careers that grow Aotearoa NZ.

##### WHAT we aim to achieve

- Businesses and communities working together to address social issues
- NZ businesses rich with local talent
- Businesses actively engaging with and connecting to their communities
- Industry investing in young, diverse thinkers as a solution to the STEM skills shortage





# YOUTH VOICES

## Rangatahi Writers' Group



### Rangatahi writers in west Auckland

After the successful 2022 pilot of the Rangatahi Writers' Group in Glen Innes, we shifted to west Auckland, where we worked with 22 rangatahi from Glen Eden and Henderson Intermediate Schools to produce a second volume of *Whakarongo ki te Reo Mātātahi*.

### Volume 2 launch event

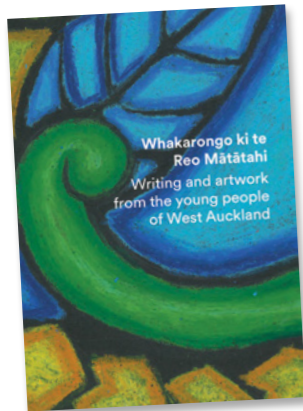
**13 November 2023.** The west Auckland writers came together at the council chambers in Henderson to showcase their stories published in *Whakarongo ki te Reo Mātātahi* volume 2 to the community and their whānau.

After hearing the rangatahi talk about their stories, attendees engaged in meaningful kōrero with them. This interactive session allowed for a rich exchange of ideas, with the adults posing thoughtful questions and encouraging the rangatahi to delve deeper into their perspectives.

### Looking ahead

Earlier this year, we began working with a dozen rangatahi from Rangeview Intermediate School in Te Atatū South to bring their lived experiences to life. These rangatahi will soon be joined by peers from Kelston and Bruce McLaren Intermediate Schools. We aim to publish a third volume of *Whakarongo ki te Reo Mātātahi* later this year.

We are also building a second phase of this mahi, which will look at how the rangatahi can address the issues they raised in their stories. Rangatahi from Glen Eden and Henderson Intermediates will be at the helm of this next phase as we look to bring their stories to life.



To read volume 2 of *Whakarongo ki te Reo Mātātahi*, scan or click on the QR code below.



## Student Voice

Student Voice aims to equip students with journalism skills through an annual series of workshops led by journalist and former *New Zealand Education Gazette* editor Geoff Vause.

This work culminates in the publication of the *Student Voice* magazine, which enables the students to express their unique perspectives on education and global issues.

For the 2023 magazine, Geoff mentored a diverse group of 22 students from five schools across Auckland, including:

- Diocesan School for Girls (Epsom)
- Flanshaw Road School (Te Atatū South)
- Massey High School (Massey)
- Rutherford College (Te Atatū Peninsula)
- St Paul's College (Ponsonby)

These students worked together to craft the 2023 issue of the *Student Voice* magazine, which showcases a range of journalistic styles, including news, opinion, investigative reporting, reviews and cartoons.

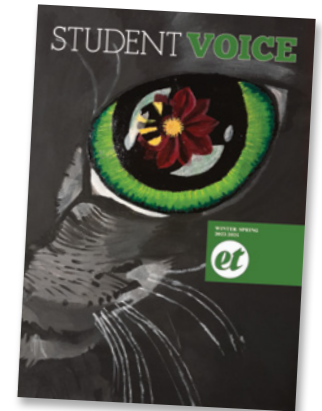
Published in December, the magazine was distributed to intermediate and secondary schools across Auckland, plus government officials (including all Members of Parliament) and whānau.

*“Student Voice is a unique agent for student perspective. We aim to nurture the love of language and the ability to conceptualise.*

– Geoff Vause, journalist



To read the 2023 issue of *Student Voice* magazine, scan or click on the QR code below.



## Youth Voices Film-making Workshop



**18 October 2023.** Student writers from the *Student Voice* and *Whakarongo ki te Reo Mātātahi* initiatives came together for a collaborative workshop at Hub West in Henderson.

For this workshop, we flipped the script and challenged the rangatahi to express their stories visually. We engaged Benji and Niko from digital content agency No Six ([nosix.co.nz](https://nosix.co.nz)) to guide the rangatahi through a crash course on film-making and visual storytelling.

Once the students had the basics down, we mixed them into groups. Within in each group, the rangatahi shared their respective story topics before selecting one to film.

The workshop proved to be a fun challenge for the rangatahi, who had to step out of their comfort zones to produce a short film within just a few hours.



## Tāmaki Makaurau Education Forum

**14 September 2023.** Local community members and educators gathered at the Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT) in Ōtara to listen to the challenges our Māori learners face at school.

Keynote speaker Kiri Turketo, principal at Sir Edmund Hillary Collegiate (SEHC), outlined her successful efforts to change her school's systems to better suit the needs of its learners. This included moving away from a focus on NCEA and credits to provide a more holistic approach to learning.

Attendees then heard from a panel of four rangatahi Māori, who spoke truthfully about the harsh realities of their school experiences, especially the struggle to support their whānau, work and make career-sensitive decisions all whilst trying to stay engaged at school.

The forum concluded with an audience-wide discussion on the important roles educators and schools have to ease the pressures raised by the panellists.



To watch highlights from TMEF 2023, scan or click on the QR code below.



# DATA & EVIDENCE

## Outcome v impact

When considering social outcomes, there is a crucial distinction between the two. In the process of publishing a book of student writing, having the rangatahi gain the confidence and self-belief to make their voices heard is an outcome. If half of those rangatahi go on to become student leaders because they experienced the power of "being heard" — that is impact.

Outcomes are measurable, specific and can yield short-term results. Impact is broader, requiring a longer timeframe to measure the changes stemming from an earlier intervention. Both are essential for charities, funders and reporting.

Outcome mapping provides a framework for programmes to plan and evaluate the capacities they are building in individuals, groups and organisations. The process enables programmes to be specific about their target audience, the expected changes and the strategies employed, leading to greater effectiveness in achieving results.



## Eastern Bay of Plenty STEMM\* Action Hui

**20 February 2024.** We facilitated a STEMM Action hui for key stakeholders from education and outreach providers, community organisations and grant funders in the Eastern Bay of Plenty (EBOP). This hui aimed to foster collaboration to grow STEMM capacity and capability in the region.

Interactive workshop sessions helped build *whanaungatanga* and a shared understanding of the aspirations participants had for EBOP's young people. This provided a springboard from which we identified actions and processes that could enable greater coordination across the STEMM ecosystem.

We then produced a comprehensive strategic action plan for the Bay Trust and Trust Horizon (two local EBOP funding organisations) to guide coordinated investment and collaboration among regional STEMM outreach and education providers.

We are excited to see that our outcomes mapping framework offers a useful tool for cross-sector collaboration. We believe this is a model that many other businesses, funding agencies and community organisations could adopt in the future.

*\*STEMM = Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Mātauranga Māori*

*"I want to extend my gratitude for your hard work on the recent report. It is exciting for the region to have a STEMM document to reference moving forward, noting the current state and the potential state."*

— community feedback on the Eastern Bay of Plenty STEMM Action Plan

## Te Rau Puāwai Education Trust

"Every dollar counts" is as much a consideration to funders as it is to charities. Te Rau Puāwai Education Trust (TRPET) has a commitment to support educational initiatives that promote collaboration, evidence-based practices and increased capabilities for individuals and communities.

TRPET's focus aligns with addressing inequalities in education, particularly for Māori, Pasifika and student support learners. With funding applications on the rise, having a way to measure and evaluate project outcomes was necessary to ensure TRPET had confidence that its work was progressing it towards attaining its vision, mission and funding purpose.

TRPET engaged us to assess the impact of their funding; develop and refine a system for measuring impact; and identify approaches to scale successful programmes by understanding common themes so this could be replicated.



To this end, we have been working alongside four of TRPET's funding recipients to ensure they have the right systems, processes and measures in place to successfully report back to TRPET at the conclusion of their funding period.

This process not only improves the way the funder makes decisions and measures its success but also equips the funding recipients with skills, systems and processes that they can take forward.

We have enjoyed being involved with the different projects, including Autism NZ's Let's Play programme, which provides parents with the tools to engage with their children through workshops and home visits, and Manaiakalani's Reading Practice Intensive, which provides teachers with PLD designed to lift their students' reading achievements.

Seeing the incredible work of these charities reminds us of the progress that is being made.



# LANGUAGES

Aotearoa NZ's increasing language diversity is an invaluable resource for social cohesion, identity, trade, tourism, educational achievement and intercultural understanding.

That's why, for the past 12 years, we have convened and supported the Auckland Languages Strategy Working Group (ALSWG), a group of passionate experts who work to promote better support for Auckland's many languages.

Over the years, the ALSWG has produced several important publications, including the *Ngā Reo o Tāmaki Makaurau – Auckland Languages Strategy*; made formal submissions to government on several language-related issues; and hosted a visit from Professor Joseph Lo Bianco, who wrote the Australian National Policy on Languages.

This past year saw the ALSWG rebrand to the Languages Alliance Aotearoa NZ — a move made to formalise their increasingly national representation and focus.

The Languages Alliance aims to support greater connections among people working in Aotearoa NZ's languages sector and promote the need for more coherent policies supporting the many languages spoken throughout the nation.



Hosted by Te Hononga Akoranga COMET, the Languages Alliance is led by three volunteer co-convenors: Dr Hilary Smith, Dr Elaine Ballard and Susan Warren.

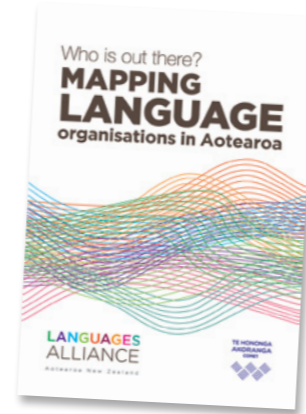
## Mapping language organisations in Aotearoa

**20 April 2024.** The Languages Alliance proudly launched *Who is out there? Mapping language organisations in Aotearoa*, a report on the nation's language organisations, at the CLESOL conference in Wellington.

*Who is out there?* is the culmination of four years of work by a team of volunteers and interns who have painted a detailed picture of the size and breadth of the nation's languages sector through consultation, an online survey and extensive internet searches.

The Languages Alliance hopes the report will both support people working in the languages sector and be of use to decision-makers in education, health and social services — as well as those working in the many other sectors where language diversity is relevant.

To read *Who is out there?*, scan or click on the QR code below.



# INVALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS



Susan Warren

*Me arahi, me whai, me whakawātea rānei*  
Lead, follow, get out of the way

This quote above Susan's office desk could not be more apt. After 13 years as our Chief Executive, Susan retired from COMET at the end of 2023. She had led, she had followed and now she was getting out of the way!

We would like to acknowledge and express our gratitude to Susan for her exceptional leadership and dedication throughout her many years with COMET. Taking on the role of CE during a challenging period, Susan successfully transitioned COMET from a Manukau-based organisation to one that serves all Aucklanders.

Under her guidance, COMET became a hub of innovation, fostering initiatives like Whānau Ara Mua, Talking Matters and the Youth Employability Programme. She also championed collective impact through the Learning Auckland initiative and led the creation of impactful resources, including numerous data snapshots on education and skills.

Susan's leadership and dedication have influenced COMET and the communities we serve. Aroha mai, aroha atu.



Ginnie Denny

Ginnie gave eight years of her time and expertise to our board, including six years as Chair. Her leadership fostered a culture of openness and inclusivity, encouraging diverse viewpoints and effective consensus decision-making.

She played a pivotal role in guiding the board to be more responsive to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, leading by example and creating a safe space for growth and learning. Ginnie's commitment of time, expertise and belief in what we do has left a lasting impact on COMET.

## Jignasha Patel

For eight years, Jignasha's strategic thinking and unwavering focus on our purpose have been invaluable. Her practical insights from her extensive experience in the sector greatly enriched our discussions.

Jignasha served as Deputy Chair and chaired the Finance Committee with dedication and skill. Her willingness to volunteer for select committees and consistently support key presentations, including AGMs and council reports, exemplified her commitment to COMET.

Te Hononga Akoranga COMET is a reflection of many brilliant people. Thank you both!

# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## Statement of Comprehensive Revenue and Expense for the year ended 30 June 2024

	2024	2023
REVENUE	\$	\$
<b>Revenue from exchange transactions</b>		
Funding from central or local government	250,885	319,819
Funding from Non-government organisations	10,000	–
Interest earned	47,624	40,657
Membership fee received	1,000	–
Other revenue	117,882	88,640
Project contribution revenue	–	2,100
<b>Revenue from non-exchange transactions</b>		
Auckland Council grant	350,000	558,000
Grants	90,624	147,255
Donations	5,000	38,120
Government wage subsidy	–	1,200
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>873,015</b>	<b>1,195,791</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Operating expenses	250,581	305,760
Human resource expenses	826,714	870,534
Partnership contributions	–	58,000
Trustees' expenses	199	3,399
Loss on disposal of property, plant, and equipment	35	4,893
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>1,077,529</b>	<b>1,242,586</b>
<b>(Deficit)/Surplus for the year from continuing operations</b>	<b>(204,514)</b>	<b>(46,795)</b>
<b>Discontinued operations</b>		
Revenue from discontinued operations	–	46,625
Expenses from discontinued operations	–	60,319
<b>(Deficit)/Surplus for the year from discontinued operations</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>(13,694)</b>
<b>(Deficit)/Surplus for the year</b>	<b>(204,514)</b>	<b>(60,489)</b>
<b>Total comprehensive revenue and expense for the year</b>	<b>(204,514)</b>	<b>(60,489)</b>

## Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2024

	2024	2023
ASSETS	\$	\$
<b>Current assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	351,501	225,674
Receivables from exchange transactions	27,440	34,500
Accrued interest	5,033	7,351
Gift card	100	–
GST refund	–	21,293
Prepayments	8,059	12,767
Short term investments	313,719	611,313
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>705,852</b>	<b>912,898</b>
<b>Non-current assets</b>		
Property, plant, and equipment	18,110	23,690
Intangible assets	972	1,944
<b>Total non-current assets</b>	<b>19,082</b>	<b>25,634</b>
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>724,934</b>	<b>938,533</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Current liabilities</b>		
Accounts payable	23,200	46,726
GST payable	23,550	–
Provision for holiday pay	29,259	19,206
Accrued expenses	36,511	38,554
Revenue received in advance	200,244	209,854
Project funding held for MBIE	10,149	17,658
<b>Total current liabilities</b>	<b>322,913</b>	<b>331,998</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>322,913</b>	<b>331,998</b>
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>402,021</b>	<b>606,535</b>
<b>Represented by TRUSTEES FUNDS</b>		
Retained earnings	84,021	150,535
Forward operating expenses reserve	318,000	456,000
<b>Total Trustees funds</b>	<b>402,021</b>	<b>606,535</b>

To read COMET's General Purpose Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2024, scan or click on the QR code below.



# OUR TEAM



**Katheren Leitner**

Chief Executive



**Linda Hu**

Director of Finance



**Dr Rajshree Krishnan**

Data & Evidence Manager



**Jonathan Longstaff**

Operations & Communications Officer



**Ying Yang**

STEM Project Manager



**Noah Meggitt**

Kaihūtono Māori



**Avni Jain**

Administrator



**Priyal Vidanage**

Finance Administrator



**Shaun Gear**

Project Development Specialist



**Dr Erika Freemantle**

WeSTEM Project Manager

## WHAKATAUĀKĪ

*E kore e taea e te whenu kotahi  
ki te raranga i te whātiriki  
kia mōhio tātou ki ā tātou.*

*Mā te mahi tahi o ngā whenu,  
mā te mahi tahi o ngā kairaranga,  
ka oti tēnei whāriki.*

*I te otinga me titiro tātou  
ki ngā mea pai ka puta mai.*

*Ā tana wā, me titiro hoki  
ki ngā raranga i makere. Nā te  
mea, he kōrero anō kei reira.*

The tapestry of understanding cannot  
be woven by one strand alone.

Only by the working together of strands  
and the working together of weavers  
will such a tapestry be completed.

With its completion, let us look at the  
good that comes from it.

In time we should also look at those  
stitches which have been dropped,  
because they also have a message.

nā **Kūkupa Tirikatene**, ONZM (1934–2018)

Art credits

Outside Cover: *He Waka* by Hamene Neppe

Inside Cover pages: *Fenua Funk* by CC Kaulima

Used with permission from [Kākanō Youth Arts Collective](#)





TE HONONGA  
AKORANGA  
COMET



Te Hononga Akoranga  
COMET, 2024  
PO Box 3430, Shortland St,  
Auckland 1010  
[cometauckland.org.nz](http://cometauckland.org.nz)